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Medal of Honor in the Arts Recipients Leave Lasting Impressions on Cultural Community

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Medal of Honor in the Arts Recipients Leave Lasting Impressions on Cultural Community

Quick Facts

- This year's three honorees are Polly Adkins '68, '72; Kitty Wilson-Evans '92; and Family Trust Federal Credit Union.
- For the first time ever, the Medal of Honor in the Arts will stretch over an entire weekend with performances.



Polly Adkins



Kitty Wilson-Evans

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University's **College of Visual and Performing Arts** will acknowledge the artistic contributions of an actor and director, a storyteller and historical interpreter, and the support of a local business at the **Medal of Honor in the Arts** on April 9. The event honors **Polly Adkins '68, '72, Kitty Wilson-Evans '92** and **Family Trust Federal Credit Union**.

For the first time, the Medal of Honor in the Arts event stretches over the entire weekend with performances all over campus. The weekend culminates with an awards dinner on Sunday, April 9, at 6 p.m. A **schedule of the weekend's events** can be found online.

The Medal of Honor in the Arts award has been granted by the College of Visual and Performing Arts since 2001. It acknowledges and recognizes the unique roles of individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the arts as well as those who have positively impacted the quality of the cultural life in communities across the Carolinas.

Tickets for the awards ceremony and dinner are \$75 each and can be **purchased online**. VIP tickets can be purchased for \$125 each and include a ticket to "The Merchant of Venice" on Sunday, April 9, at 2 p.m. A portion of the Medal of Honor in the Arts event proceeds go towards a scholarship fund that helps support talented Winthrop students who have an interest in pursuing careers in the visual arts, dance, music or theatre.

Learn more about this year's recipients:

Polly Adkins '68, '72 has performed in many roles at the Rock Hill Community Theatre, Main Street Theatre and the Fort Mill Community Playhouse. She also began performing in Charlotte, North Carolina, winning seven Metrolina Theatre Awards for acting and directing, and three Creative Loafing Awards. She has performed at Actor's Theatre of Charlotte, Queen City Theatre, CPCC Summer Theater, Theatre Charlotte,



Barebones Theatre, Victory Pictures, Belmont Abbey Players and the New Stage Ensemble Summer Rep at Winthrop. She was twice picked as Charlotte Magazine's Best of the Best

Actress.

Adkins served on the Actor's Theatre of Charlotte's Board of Directors for over 10 years and is presently on the Fort Mill Community Playhouse Board. She helped create Rock Hill's Main Street Theatre, which operated for several years until the theatre was torn down for local development. Adkins continues to direct at the Fort Mill Playhouse and other regional theatres and has directed North Carolina shows for Theatre Charlotte, Donna Scott Productions and ATC's NuVoices Festival. She also has been featured in local commercials.

For two years, Adkins helped develop Create Carolina, an arts project bringing together Winthrop University students and professional arts experts from across the country. Create Carolina was founded by Charles Randolph-Wright, famed director of MOTOWN and screenplay writer for Showtime, HBO and 20th Century Fox.

Adkins was born in Charlotte and grew up in Rock Hill. She attended Winthrop College, graduating Magna Cum Laude in 1968. She earned an M.A. from Winthrop in French. She taught French and theatre at York Comprehensive High School for 43 years, directing and producing plays at the school.

Kitty Wilson-Evans '92 is a nationally acclaimed historical-interpreter and storyteller. Her most famous slave re-enactment is the character of Kessie, who Wilson-Evans portrayed at Historic Brattonsville in York County during the 1990s and up until her retirement in 2010. She blazed new trails at this historic site by being the first African-American interpreter.

Wilson-Evans received many awards and recognitions for her interpretive work, including the Rock Hill/York County Convention and Visitors Bureau Heart of Industry Tourism Award (2010), the Jubilee Festival Heritage Award (2009) and the Robert E. Lee Service Award from the Ben Caudill Camp, Sons of Confederate Veterans (2008). Wilson-Evans co-authored a book with Lucinda Dunn entitled "Kessie's Tale," based on stories of Kessie, a young slave girl at Brattonsville in the early 1800s.

Wilson-Evans was born at Fort Benning, Georgia. She earned a B.A. from the University of South Carolina and a M.A. in children's literature from Winthrop. Wilson-Evans has performed in rural schools with the SC Arts Commission and worked as a teacher with the Chapter I in Lancaster County public schools and in private schools as well.

Family Trust Federal Credit Union was established by employees at the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Co. in 1957, and its 60th anniversary celebration this year will emphasize the philosophy of "people helping people." First located in a stock room at the textile plant, it provided a way for employees to save and acquire loans when denied by traditional banks or taken advantage of by loan sharks.

Originally called the RHP&F Federal Credit Union, it was open only to employees of the plant. Later, as the mill declined, the credit union sought members elsewhere and changed its name in 1988 to better reflect its wider audience. A community charter that allowed it to serve anyone who lives, works, worships or goes to school in York County was approved in 2000.

Today, the credit union has more than \$455 million in assets, 50,000 members and seven branches throughout York County. It employs 153 and offers the same products and services as most major financial institution including investments, digital banking and mortgages.

In 2015, the credit union opened a three-story headquarters where the first branch once stood, and features nine pieces of artwork commissioned from six Winthrop art students. The company is devoted to giving back to its community, especially to teachers and education. Contributions include \$10,000 in teacher grants and a school planner distributed annually to 7,500 educators across the county.

For more information, contact **Whitney Hough**, director of communications and community engagement for the College of Visual and Performing Arts, at 803/323-2399 or houghw@winthrop.edu, or visit the website at www.winthrop.edu/arts.

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